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ABSTRACT

The author contends that teacher education courses must begin to encourage future teachers to think constructively about the future and how it will affect them personally and as members of society. The appropriate place of the futuristic material is discussed, and the inclusion of such studies in traditional History of Education and Philosophy of Education courses is suggested. A description is given of the way in which one small college incorporated a futurisitc perspective into regular teacher education courses. Detailed examples of exercises used by that college are given. Information regarding the aim, source or reccmmended text to be used, classroom procedure, time requirements, and necessary materials for each of the suggested exercises is included. (LH)

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# Getting Future Teachers To Think About Teaching in the Future

My thesis this morning will be: if the study of the future is important for today's elementary and secondary school students, then it is critical that a futures perspective be introduced into teacher education classes.

The problem, of course, is how to do this. Should a new course be designed, a special course, one required of all teacher education students? This approach presents problems for a small college, particularly at a time when teacher education itself is in a period of retrenchment. The alternative was to incorporate a futures perspective into an existing course and at Siena Heights College this was the preferred route.

The course chosen was History and Philosophy of Education. Traditionally this has been considered one of the dryest courses in teacher education sequences. Although it is frequently the class that teachers complain has the least practical value when they get out into the classroom, the processes involved in understanding history and understanding philosophy are vital to effective teaching. Futuring seemed to be a good vehicle for involving students in these processes: futuring tapped the emphasis on wonder that is the essence of philosophy and futuring, as an activity, was seen as analogous to history-ing, that sense of the process of history as opposed to the catalog of names and dates.

I'd like to elaborate on each of these foci a little. First of all, when focusing on philosophy, the key was Maxine Greene's phrase (in Teacher as Stranger): "Doing a philosophy and building a world." The contention was that philosophizing is the basic human activity, that being human means trying to make sense of the world, to discern one's place in the universe, to interpret the course of events and to determine how they should be interpreted. So the trick seemed to be to find something to introduce the students to, to involve them in, that sense of philosophizing and to put them in touch with themselves as philosophers - and futuring, wondering about tomorrow, seemed to do it!

When focusing on history, the key was Santayana's dictim that "those who forget the past are doomed to repeat it." The emphasis was on history as a process and the contention was that there are varieties of history (political, geographic, philosophical, etc.) and that it is important for the student to be able to identify the bias of the historian. This brief introduction to historiography was intended to give students a sense of the role of persons (historians) in history and memory (where history is seen as collective memory). This emphasis on the personal is obvious in individual histories and Sam Keen's comment easily applies: "The purpose of memory is not the objective recording of data, but the preservation of the psyche." However, what is obviously true for individuals, is also true for nations, and for disciplines, such as education. A second glimpse into the idiosyncratic aspects of history is revealed when the class considers revisionist history. Here they can get a sense of alternative pasts, somewhat analogous to the alternative futures implicit in Toffler's paradigm of possible, probable, and preferable futures.

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Several principles were followed in incorporating an emphasis on futures in the History and Philosophy of Education course. First of all, methodology was considered critical. Teacher Education classes are notorious for dull teaching. This is particularly disastrous for potential teachers since we tend to teach the way we were taught, rather than the way we were taught to teach. I know, for example, that in my education courses, the students pay as much, if not more, attention to how I teach as what I teach.

Secondly, for the imposition of a futures orientation on a History and Philosophy of Education to be achieved with integrity, the whole effort must have a focus-to avoid that sense of interesting, but disjointed, exercises. For the course at Siena Heights, an emphasis on the personal was selected as the integrating factor (this choice proved to be a felicitous one given the narcissism and egocentrism of the traditinal 18 - 22 year-old college students and the transition crises of older students). Thus the general focus of the activities used in the course was the question "what does all this have to do with me as a potential teacher?" During the historical sections of the course, the focus was, "with whom from the past can I identify? why are my philosophical ancestors?" And finally, the futures focus of the course was, "can I see myself as a teacher in the future I'm describing?"

With these principles in mind, the History and Philosophy of Education course was organized. The texts for the course are Don Fabun's Dynamics of Change and Alvin Toffler's Learning For Tomorrow. Additionally, each student reads from at least five history of education texts of his/her own choosing. The combination seems to be a felicitous one. The variety of history texts--frequently as many as forty different texts are used by the total class--presents an interesting sense of alternative pasts, somewhat analogous to Toffler's notion of possible, probable, and preferable futures.

Dynamics of Change, written in 1967, presents projections for the twenty years through 1987. Using the book in the mid-seventies puts the reader in the useful position of assessing the projections at mid-point. The articles in Toffler's book consider a variety of topics related to education and the future: racist and sexist images of the future, the role of the several disciplines in a future-oriented curriculum, teaching about the future in elementary and secondary schools and colleges, specific strategies for futuring (values, science fiction, gaming and simulation), and others. These texts are supplemented by selected audio-visual materials, including the films, Future Shock and Cities in the Future, and the Newsweek filmstrip, 2000 AD.

With these resources as a foundation, the students take part in small group activities focusing on education in the future. Several of these activities are described in the pages that follow.

Although it is ironic that the two texts used in this course have recently gone out of print, the four years that the History and Philosophy of Education course at Siena Heights was taught with an emphasis on the future provided an interesting experience in futuring a teacher education program.

## FUTURE TIME LINE

Aim: To help students explore their own sense of the future

Source: "The Psychology of the Future" by Alvin Toffler in Learning For Tomorrow, Alvin Toffler (ed). NY: Tandom House, 1974, p. 3-18.

Procedure:

(1) Ask students to each write on seven small pieces of paper or 3 x 5 cards any seven events that they think will occur in the future and the date for which they predict the occurence of each. (The events may be either on a personal or global scale; the future may be any time from tomorrow until centuries from now.)

(2) Have each student arrange the events they predicted in chronological order, earliest to latest.

(3) Then ask each student to pair with another and collate their events, noting especially which events were predicted for the same year and which events were predicted in common even though for different years.

(4) Repeat the process with two pairs.

(5) Repeat the process again with four pairs.

(6) If the total group exceeds eight, have each group of eight bring their piles of events in chronological order to the teacher, who then reads aloud from the piles, simultaneously noting all events which occurred in the same year.

(7) Before the teacher begins to read, students should be assigned various variables for analysis of the picture of the future they are about to hear. Suggested variables include:

a. Would you be happy in this future?
b. What is the relative proportion of personal and global events?
c. Is this vision of the future essentially optomistic or essentially pessimistic?
d. What is the role of government in this vision of the future? of the family? of education? etc.
e. Which events seem to be inevitable, i.e., are predicted time and again although in different years?
f. How many instances are there of mutually exclusive events predicted for the same year, e.g., World War III and the birth of the first grandchild.

(8) After the reading of the predicted events for the future, a debriefing can be held based on student responses to questions like those above.

(9) Ask each student to write a one paragraph essay describing their reactions to the vision of the future presented through this exercise.

Time: 60 - 90 minutes, depending on the size of the group

Materials: Paper and pencil

## Analyzing Educational Philosophies

Aim: To increase students' awareness of the philosophy of education espoused by their education institution and to evaluate these philosophies according to future-oriented criteria.

Reference: "The Psychology of the Future" by Alvin Toffler in Learning For Tomorrow, Alvin Toffler, (ed). NY: Random House, 1974, p. 3-18.

Procedure:

(1) Obtain a copy of the school's educational philosophy and have it retyped or duplicated in such a way as to delete any specific references to the educational institution.

(2) Distribute copies of the philosophy to each student without revealing the identity of the school it represents, indeed perhaps deliberately obscuring its identity to help students maintain neutrality with respect to it.

(3) Have the students read "The Psychology of the Future" or something of a similar nature.

(4) Ask students to work in pairs identifying the characteristics of future-oriented education described therein.

(5) Then ask each pair to analyze the philosophy of the "Anonymous" institution according to these characteristics, noting page numbers (from the article) or other explicit references to substantiate their claim that a particular portion of the philosophy is, or is not, future-oriented.

(6) Ask each pair to rate each part of the philosophy (if it is in discrete sections) or the entire philosophy (if it is a more amorphous format) on a scale of 1 to 10 with respect to its future-orientation.

(7) Conduct a general class discussion about the future-orientation of the philosophy, with specific references to the article read.

(8) Have the pairs of students cast a second vote for the overall future orientation of the philosophy after the discussion.

(9) Note and comment on with the students any changes in the assessment of the future-orientation of the philosophy.

(10) Reveal the identity of the institution and check to see if students were surprised, had ever read the school's philosophy before, were satisfied with it, were satisfied with the college's delivery of it, etc.

Time: 45 - 60 minutes

Materials: Copies of the institution's philosophy, access to "The Psychology of the Future" or a similar article

## STRATEGIES FOR RELATING VALUES TO THE FUTURE

Aim: To give students an opportunity to think about their personal futures.

Reference: Values Clarification: A Handbook of Practical Strategies for Teachers and Students by Sidney B. Simon, Leland W. Howe and Howard Kirschenbaum, New York: Hart Publishing Co., 1972.

1. EPITAPH

Purpose: Sometimes it helps to gain perspective of life by contemplating death. What is life all about? What difference would it make if you were not alive?

Procedure: The teacher says, "Have any of you ever been to old graveyards and read some of the inscriptions on the tombstones?"
What would you want engraved on your own tombstone? What would be an accurate description of you and your life in a few short words?
After students write their own epitaphs, they may share them in small groups or out loud with the entire class.
If they wish, the students could cut out a piece of construction paper in the shape of a tombstone and put their epitaph on it, complete with stone-cutter type of illustrations or decorations. A very strong bulletin board display can be made from these. Some time could be set aside for a gallery walk in which students share with each other what was behind the epitaphs they put on their tombstone.

Note: Extend to any student the right to pass in this exercise. Be sensitive to the fact that death is an especially frightening thought to many students. It is also helpful if the teacher has an epitaph of his/her own to read. The teacher must be willing to put his/her values on the line, if he/she expects students to learn to do so.

2. OBITUARY

Purpose: This strategy helps the student see his life more clearly from the perspective of his imagined death. This exercise raises specific issues about the quality of one's life. It reinforces the fact that we still have a life ahead of us to do whatever we want with.

Procedure: The teacher says, "We are going to look at life by viewing it again from the perspective of death. I am going to ask you to write your own obituary. Here is a simple format, although you are free to write your obituary in your own form. You can use as many of these suggestions as you wish, or add your own."

John/Jane Doe, age _____, died yesterday from . . . .
He/she was a member . . . .
He/she is survived by . . . .
At the time of his/her death he/she was working on becoming . . . .
He/she will be remembered for . . . .
He/she will be mourned by . . . .because. . . .
The world will suffer the loss of his/her contributions in the areas of . . . .
He/she always wanted, but never got to . . . .

Note: A variation - the students draw a line down the middle of their papers. On the left side they write their obituary as it would appear if they were to die that day; on the right side, they write their obituary as they would like it to appear if they were to die three years from now.

3. TWO IDEAL DAYS

Purpose: As part of the life-planning series, this strategy makes the point that we ought to be clear about what we want out of life. Students are asked to construct two perfect days, and in the process they learn more about what they really love in life.

Procedure: The teacher says, "Project yourself into the future, any time from tomorrow to several years from now, and imagine two days that would be ideal for you. Imagine 48 hours of what would be for you the best possible use of that period of time. Write about your perfect, ideal two days. Talk about where you would be, what you would be doing, who else might be there and so on. Try to picture what you would be doing for the full 48 hours. Go into as much detail as you can in your fantasy - smells, sounds, the weather, if they play a part." After all the students have written about their two ideal days, the teacher asks for volunteers to read them aloud; alternatively, the students can share in small groups.

Time: about 30 minutes each

Materials: paper and pencil, (#2 - construction paper)

Constraints: Because of the personal nature of some of this material care must be taken not to violate the privacy or integrity of the students.

Additional Reference: "Values and the Future Movement in Education" by Howard Kirschenbaum and Sidney Simon in Learning for Tomorrow Alvin Toffler (ed.). New York: Random, 1974, pp. 257-271.

## Designing a Curriculum for the Future

Aim: To assist students in applying information about the future to specific courses they may one day be expected to teach.

References: "Educating the Youngest for Tomorrow" by Harold C. Shane
"Teaching the Twenty-First Century in a Twentieth-Century High School" by Priscilla P. Griffin
"Futurism and the Reform of Higher Education" by Phillip Werdell
All in Learning for Tomorrow, edited by Alvin Toffler, NY: Random, 1974.

Procedure:

(1) Ask students to read the chapter of their choice depending upon whether they intend to teach at the elementary, secondary, or college level.

(2) Ask students to group in threes according to the same educational level and to go through the appropriate chapter again together, this time looking for characteristics of education in the future at that level.

(3) Then ask each group, using the characteristics generated above as guidelines, to come up with the names and descriptions (akin to the course description found in college catalogs) of three courses appropriate for that educational level in the future (I usually suggest a specific year, e.g., 2010).

(4) After sufficient time has elapsed, ask each group to report back with the names and descriptions of the courses they have devised.

(5) As the groups from each educational level report, ask the entire class to look for similarities between the courses proposed by different groups.

(6) When all the groups have reported, ask students to look for connections between the courses presented for the three educational levels.

(7) Finally, ask students to consider the following questions (orally or in writing):

a. Would you be comfortable teaching these classes?

b. Is there anything you should be doing now to prepare to teach such classes?

c. If you don't teach these classes, who will?

Time: 60 - 75 minutes

Materials: References cited earlier; paper and pencil

## CLASSROOM SCENARIOS

Aim: To encourage students to put into a practical perspective their theorizing about the future of education.

Reference: "Automation" in Dynamics of Change, Don Fabun, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1967.

Procedure:

(1) Organize students in groups of twos and threes according to the geographic locale in which they would prefer to teach, e.g., rural, small town, mid-sized town, suburb, metropolis, etc.

(2) Ask each group to design a one-day scenario for education in the future. The scenario should be as specific as possible, using a daily schedule or time-table approach is frequently of assistance in this regard. Students are encouraged to consider details like transportation to and from school, lunch menu, courses being taught, etc.

(3) After scenarios are completed, they should be shared orally with the entire class. Students should listen for answers to questions like the following:
   a. What is the role of teachers in these scenarios?
   b. Would you personally be interested in being a teacher in any of these scenarios?
   c. What would teacher education programs be like if their purpose was to train the teachers described in these scenarios?

(4) Conduct a general discussion on these and related issues.

Time: 45 - 60 minutes

## MEETING THE FUTURE THROUGH SIMULATION

Aim: To provide students with an opportunity to meet the future in very practical terms.

Reference: "Futuristics, Games and Educational Change" by Billy Rojas in Learning For Tomorrow, Alvin Toffler (ed.). New York: Random, 1974, pp. 217-233.

Rationale: The pedagogical soundness of simulation and gaming as general methodolies needs no additional documentation here. However, they are especially appropriate for future teachers to think about teaching in the future. Almost any commercial or teacher made game or simulation focused on the future can be adopted for this purpose. For example, the Newsweek Education Department (444 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10022) has designed a role playing simulation entitled "Future City" in which students assume the role of interest groups assigned the task of designing a plan for the future of their city.

As constituted the simulation takes 6-6 1/2 hours, however, it is possible to condense the process to approximately 2 1/2 hours.

The questions directed to the students at the conclusion of the activity are: (a) What does all this have to do with education? (b) "What does all this have to do with me as someone who is thinking of becoming a teacher?"

## ALTERNATIVE FUTURES THROUGH SCIENCE FICTION

**Aim:** To use the mind-stretching capabilities of science fiction to encourage future teachers to think about teaching in the future.

**References:**

(1) School and Society Through Science Fiction. Joseph D. Olander, et al. Chicago: Rand McNally, 1974.

(2) "Science Fiction as an Educational Tool" by Dennis Livingston in Learning For Tomorrow, Alvin Toffler, (ed). New York: Random, 1974, pp. 234-256.

(3) Grokking the Future--Science Fiction in the Classroom. Bernard Hollister and Deane Thompson, Dayton, OH: Pflaum/Standard, 1973.

(4) November, 1977 issue of Media and Methods

(5) "Science Fiction Stories in the Social Studies" by Alan Wohlfeil in The Clearing House, January, 1970. pp. 300-304.

(6) "Science Fiction: Curriculum for the Future" by Barbara Gay Ford and Ronald D. Ford, Learning, May/June, 1975. pp. 52-53.

**Procedure:**

(1) Arrange to have the use of a room that is large enough to set-up several learning stations.

(2) Possibilities for stations include:

(a) reading a story from School and Society Through Science Fiction and answering the typical education-text-book-like questions provided at its conclusion.

(b) looking through books and periodicals dealing with science fiction as vehicle for learning at the elementary and secondary school level and gleaning at least one idea for possible use when teaching.

(c) listening to a taped science fiction story and speculating on the assumptions about education inherent in it.

(d) looking through books on the history of science fiction or science fiction as a literary genre for one new insight from the prospective teacher's personal perspective.

(e) listening to a tape of a science fiction author speaking about his/her craft and speculating on ways in which that individual could be considered an educator.

(3) Divide students into as many groups as there are learning stations available and have the groups (hopefully of five or less each) rotate through the stations, spending approximately 15 minutes at each.

(4) At the conclusion of the period ask students to indicate briefly in writing the connections they see between this activity and philosophy of education.

**Time:** At least 60 - 75 minutes

**Materials:** enough resources at each station for each student to have access to them, tape recorders (preferably with head sets), directions for the steps to be followed at each stati n, wall signs identifying each station.

## THE CURRICULUM AND THE FUTURE

**Aim:** To expose teacher education students to the future-oriented dimensions of the academic subjects they are preparing to teach.

**References:** "Social Science: The Future As A Missing Variable", by Wendell Bell;
"The Humanities Face Tomorrow" by Nell Eurich;
"Educating Scientists for Tomorrow" by John Wren-Lewis;
All from Learning For Tomorrow, Alving Toffler (ed). New York: Random, 1974.

**Procedure:**
(1) Divide students into small groups according to their academic majors/minors areas of interest.
(2) Have each group consider questions similar to those that follow.
(3) Ask each small group to act as a panel reporting back their responses to the questions to the whole class.
(4) At the conclusion of each panel, ask the students listening to each write down one comment/idea mentioned by the panel that they had not considered before.
(5) These papers should then be given to the panel and some time allowed for reading them at the end of the activity.

**Time:** 60 - 75 minutes

**Materials:** paper and pencil, references cited above, duplicated questions

**Sample Questions:** Social Science (General)

1. Why has the past dominated social science thinking?
2. Can you cite an instance of 'the future as cause' that occurs in your aspect to social science?
3. What role does your field play in focusing on human value for the future?

Anthropology

1. What is the difference between space-travelers and time-travelers and what are the implications of each for anthropology?
2. How could anthropologists study the future as well as the past?

Economics

1. Indicate some ways in which economics has been past, and present rather then future oriented?
2. Is imagaination generally emphasized in economics? Could it be? How?

Political Science

1. Can you think of any instances in political science where the future has been the result of a self-fulfilling prophesy?
2. How does the subservience-subersion dichotomy facing political scientists affect their approaches to the future?

Psychology

1. What is the role of the future in psychotherapy?
2. How are 'time', 'change', and the 'future' related to Psychology?

Sociology



1. Are the six missing traits of American sociology (p. 98) really missing?
2. If every society gets the kind of criminals it deserves, what kind

Sociology (cont'd)

of criminals do we want?

Humanities

1. How do humanities influence the prevailing value system?
2. How can a humanist resolve the contradiction/tension between 'cherishing a heritage' and being 'past-oriented'?
3. What does 'empathy across time' mean? Have you ever known a teacher who possessed it?
4. Can you think of any artists, musicians, poets, film-makers, etc., who were like distant warning systems of the human condition today? (Kepes)
5. What is the role of pashion in the future of the humanities?

Science (Natural)

1. In your opinion, is there a direct correlation between science courses and lack of awareness of wider human issues?
2. What is the relationship between 'knowledge', 'power', and 'conviction'? (p. 160)
3. Is the sterotype of the scientist as unemotional and unimaginative as substantiated one in your mind?
4. What are the future moral obligations of scientists?
5. What is the Frankenstein complex?